

And here is the second lesson these Georgetown students came to realize and what remains a valuable lesson that the environmental community needs to appreciate as a movement. The public and many elected officials are not always in sync with what we need to do to restore the environment and preserve it for future generations. Progress on the environmental front has never been a clear and straight line but erratic path with peaks and troughs. But, if we look back over the past 40 years, we have seen considerable progress. If you were to average out all the peaks and troughs, an upward progress would begin to appear. We can be proud of our achievements and the fact that such landmark laws like the Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act, and many others that we have passed since the 1970s, have gone a long way toward restoring the environment. Our land, air and water are cleaner than they were on the first Earth Day.

While the science of today has led us to a better understanding of our relationship with nature, we must also appreciate that a democracy requires time for the public to accept and support the necessary changes.

Just as the time may not be ripe to ban the use of plastic bags, we can encourage broader public participation in recycling and promoting alternatives that over time will achieve the same goal. There are a number of proven approaches that work to reduce plastic and paper bag use. All have merit and the states are the appropriate forum through which these approaches can be developed and implemented.

Again I applaud the efforts of the two Georgetown students and their class for providing us a valuable political lesson on this 40th anniversary of the first Earth Day.

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S QUESTIONABLE NASA PLAN

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the FY2011 budget proposed by President Obama for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA. I believe the administration plan would abdicate U.S. leadership in space. Nearly every astronaut, including Neil Armstrong, the first man to walk on the moon, has spoken out against this misguided budget proposal.

I submit articles from The Wall Street Journal and the Orlando Sentinel which further call into question the administration's judgment with regard to NASA.

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 17, 2010]

NASA WHIPS AW: PROP RE-DO FOR OBAMA'S SPEECH

When President Barack Obama gave his long-awaited speech Thursday laying out a vision for NASA, the backdrop featured an immaculate mockup of the Orion space capsule.

But only a few days before, workers at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida had frantically removed all vestiges of the Orion program from the same building.

What prompted the prop swap?

The reasons behind the abrupt scene change—and Obama's positive words about Orion in his address—reflect the sudden shifts and last-minute policy decisions that continue to buffet the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. For more on that, read this WSJ article.)

In February, the White House shocked many in industry and Congress by seeking to kill NASA's Constellation manned exploration program, designed to replace the retiring space shuttle fleet and eventually take astronauts back to the moon and on to Mars. The multi-billion dollar Orion capsule, reminiscent of the Apollo era, is part of that program.

In the following months, the Obama administration resisted entreaties by Lockheed Martin, the capsule contractor, and its champions on Capitol Hill to save Orion. The company repeatedly tried but failed to interest NASA and the White House in pursuing a less-expensive, stripped-down version of the capsule, "Orion light." For the White House, all of Constellation was too expensive and would take too long to complete.

On Mondays as the space center was preparing for the high-profile presidential policy speech, Lockheed had forklifts and other equipment hurriedly removing everything related to Orion from the building where Obama would speak, according to people familiar with the details. Administration officials bluntly told company executives that the president didn't want to be associated with Orion.

That quickly changed. On Tuesday afternoon, chief White House science adviser John Holdren called Joanne Maguire, head of Lockheed Martin's space programs, to inform her that a revised version of the Orion capsule would be reinstated in the president's plans. Now, NASA wants to use the capsule, at the very least, as an emergency escape system for U.S. astronauts when they are on the international space station.

That still left NASA, however, with the dilemma of what to do about the mockup. Between Tuesday night and Thursday morning, the White House, NASA managers and local center officials managed to restore the Orion mockup to its earlier prominence in the building. "Things were really changing pretty quickly there, at the end," said one administration official.

As photographers and reporters swarmed around Obama, pictures of the capsule were beamed around the world.

Lockheed didn't have any comment. The White House had no immediate comment.

During his speech, Obama had only nice things to say about the Lockheed Martin program, though he initially mispronounced its name. NASA, he said, "will build on the good work already done" on the Orion crew capsule, and it will become "part of the technological foundation for advanced spacecraft to be used in future deep-space missions."

[From OrlandoSentinel.com, Apr. 18, 2010]

OBAMA'S SPACE PLAN ADDS INSULT TO INJURY

(By Douglas MacKinnon)

With all due respect to President Obama, regarding his speech in Florida on "Space Exploration in the 21st Century," I simply have to ask, "Are you kidding me?"

As one who has consulted on and written extensively about our space program, worked in the White House and drafted a speech or two, I know shameless pandering filler when I read it.

The president's speech had more useless and suspect filler than a New York City street hot dog—part of that filler being when

the president recognized his chief science adviser, John Holdren. This is the same man who just told students the United States couldn't be No. 1 in science forever.

When the nation and the program most needed honesty, true direction and an unwavering belief in the promise of space, the president chose to add insult to the injury that is the dismantling of our human spaceflight program. To quote Neil Armstrong, James Lovell and Eugene Cernan, the president's decision to "... cancel the Constellation program, its Ares 1 and Ares V rockets, and the Orion spacecraft, is devastating."

Three heroic and history-making astronauts take the unusual step of writing an open letter to warn of this "devastating" action, and the president responds with a pedestrian speech that makes a mockery of a dire situation. Worse, for purely political reasons, he decided to pit the Apollo 11 moonwalkers against each other.

To try and blunt the criticism of him by the first man to step on the surface of the moon, Obama not only flew Buzz Aldrin with him on Air Force One for the event at Kennedy Space Center, but led his remarks by referring to Aldrin as a legend. Aldrin may be the only one not aware of his role as a prop of the White House political operation.

It's not a stretch to imagine Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel turning to David Axelrod and saying, "If the first man on the moon is going to strongly and publicly criticize us, then let's use the second man to walk on the moon as validation for our 'promise them anything but deliver nothing' new vision."

In a speech void of detail, the president said, "By the mid-2030s, I believe we can send humans to orbit Mars and return them safely to Earth." Where have I heard something like that before? That would be President George H. W. Bush in July 1989 when he spoke of landing Americans on Mars. Twenty-one years later, Obama gives us a watered-down version of that speech.

In 1989, much of the media rightfully took President Bush to task for an open-ended goal that lacked specifics and would have carried a price tag in the hundreds of billions of dollars. Say what you will about Bush's half-hearted effort, at least his astronauts would have landed on the Red Planet. Under Obama's fictional plan, for our investment of more than \$100 billion, our astronauts would only get to wave at Mars as they zipped around it, with a landing saved for a future mission. Can't we just wave at it for free from here on Earth?

The president betrayed both his lack of interest in human spaceflight as well as his ignorance of the subject when he said, "Now, I understand that some believe that we should attempt a return to the surface of the moon first, as previously planned. But I just have to say pretty bluntly here. We've been there before. Buzz has been there..."

By that thinking, European explorers should have abandoned the New World and President Jefferson should have ignored the explorations and discoveries of great natural wealth made by Lewis and Clark.

For reasons of cost, commercial enterprise, science and national security, it makes sense for us to establish bases, observatories, mines and potentially even military operations on the moon. If we don't, others—particularly the People's Republic of China with its military-controlled space program—most assuredly will.

President Obama has played the space community for fools, and he's hoping he will get away with it. Unfortunately for us all, China, Russia and others share his hope.